

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 IGA-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-11

CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 DRC-01 /139 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6702

INFO CINCPAC

DOD WASHDC

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 14721

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MPOL, TH

SUBJECT: THAI DEFENSE MINISTER'S REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL AID

SUMMARY: DURING MEETING LASTING WELL OVER AN HOUR THIS MORNING, DEFENSE MINISTER KRUEN AND HIS SENIOR STAFF MEMBERS MADE STRONG PLEA FOR CONTINUED SUBSTANTIAL LEVEL OF U.S. MILITARY AID TO HELP THAI ARMED FORCES MEET PRESSING INTERNAL SECURITY NEEDS AND HELP OFFSET REDUCTIONS WHICH CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT HAS MADE IN MILITARY BUDGET. CONSIDERING CLOSENESS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP AND CONTINUED NEED FOR RTG COOPERATION, I BELIEVE THAI HAVE A GOOD CASE. I SUGGESTED THAT KRUEN DISCUSS THIS FRANKLY WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS LATER THIS MONTH. I WILL ALSORAISE SUBJECT DURING MY OCTOBER CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON. JOINT U.S.-THAI GROUP WHICH WE AGREED TO FORM TO ASSESS INSURGENCY WILL HELP REFINE THAI REQUIREMENTS AND RELATE THEM TO EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL THREAT AND U.S. CAPABILITIES. END SUMMARY.

1. THIS MORNING (SEPTEMBER 12) I MET WITH GENERAL KRUEN SUTHANINTR, MINISTER OF DEFENSE, HIS DEPUTY MINISTERS ADMIRAL THAWIN RAYANON AND AIR CHIEF MARSHAL BUA SIRISOP,

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AND GENERAL KRAINGSAK. I WAS ACCOMPANIED BY DCM MASTERS

AND MAJOR GENERAL HIXON. WHEN WE ARRIVED FOR THE APPOINTMENT GENERAL KRAINGSAK SAID THAT THE DEFENSE MINISTER WISHED TO SEE ME PRIVATELY IN HIS OFFICE. I SPENT APPROXIMATELY 25 MINUTES ALONE WITH HIM AND HIS DEPUTIES AND GENERAL KRAINGSAK, WHO ACTED AS INTERPRETER. THIS MEETING PROVIDED THE FIRST SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS I HAVE HAD WITH THE DEFENSE MINISTER.

2. GENERAL KRUEEN FIRST ASKED ME WHAT TOPICS I WISHED TO PURSUE. I MENTIONED AMONG OTHER GENERAL SECURITY PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THAILAND WITHIN THE SOUTHEAST ASIA REGION, STATUS OF THE INSURGENCY, AND THE US MAP PROGRAM. IN RESPONSE, DEFENSE MINISTER KRUEEN SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK TO ME FARNKLY AS A SOLDIER AND NOT AS A SPOKESMAN FOR THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT. HE SPOKE VERY PASSIONATELY BUT VERY PRECISELY REGARDING THE SERIOUS THREAT FACING THAILAND IN THE NORTHEAST. HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE ROLE BEING PLAYED BY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE REFUGEES LIVING THERE. HE BELIEVES AT LEAST EIGHTY PER CENT OF THEM ARE ACTIVELY COOPERATING WITH HANOI. HE ALSO BELIEVES THAT THE NUMBER OF THESE REFUGEES IS BEING INCREASED BY INFILTRATORS COMING FROM NORTH VIETNAM WHO POSE AS LONG-TIME MEMBERS OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE REFUGEE COMMUNITY.

3. GENERAL KRUEEN WAS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE MOVEMENT OF HEAVIER ARMS INTO THE AREA FROM ACROSS THE MEKONG. (I PRESUME HE WAS REFERRING TO MORTARS AND ROCKETS, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT SPECIFY). HE SAID HE WAS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE CONFLICT IN CAMBODIA AND RECOGNIZED THE CONSIDERED EFFORTS THE US WAS MAKING TO KEEP THE GKR AFLOAT. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE FEARED THAT THAILAND COULD FACE A COMPARABLE SITUATION TO THAT WHICH NOW EXISTS IN CAMBODIA. HE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE US HAS AN INTEREST IN PRESERVING THE TRADITIONAL INTEGRITY OF THAILAND AND HE WANTED HELP FROM US NOW SO THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE EFFORT TO DISRUPT NORTHEASTERN THAILAND WOULD NOT GET OUR OF HAND.

4. GENERAL KRUEEN REPEATEDLY STRESSED THAT HE WAS SPEAKING AS A SOLDIER, THAT HE BELIEVED THE ROYAL THAI ARMY

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WAS THE MAIN FORCE HOLDING THAILAND TOGETHER AND THAT IT WAS IN OUR INTEREST TO KEEP IT STRONG, NOT ONLY TO BE ABLE TO COPE WITH PROBLEMS OF THE NORTHEAST, BUT ALSO WITH THE KIND OF TROUBLE WHICH MIGHT POTENTIALLY DEVELOP IN THE BANGKOK AREA.

THE CLEAR THRUST OF KRUEEN'S MESSAGE WAS THAT THE US SHOULD HELP THAILAND NOW IN ORDER TO PREVENT SERIOUS

TROUBLE FROM DEVELOPING LATER. SPECIFICALLY, HE SAID WE SHOULD KEEP OUR MILITARY AID PROGRAM AT PRESENT LEVELS. (I LATER TOLD HIM I PRESUMED HE WAS REFERRING TO THE FY74 FUNDING LEVEL OF APPROXIMATELY \$32.5 MILLION (INCLUDING PCH AND T) AND MY PRESUMPTION WAS NOT CONTESTED.) HE SAID THAT, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, WE SHOULD INCREASE THIS LEVEL.

6. (COMMENT: IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT MINISTER KRUEEN'S AIDE, CAPTAIN NARINAT, GAVE ESSENTIALLY THE SAME MESSAGE TO MY STAFF AIDE IN A MEETING YESTERDAY. NARINAT CLAIMED THAT THE ROYAL THAI ARMY, AFTER LAST OCTOBER 14TH, WAS UNABLE TO GET ADEQUATE BUDGET FROM THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT NOW DOMINATED BY CIVILIANS. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION OF ITS PLANS FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF THAILAND'S ARMED FORCES TO DEAL WITH THE THREAT FROM NORTH VIETNAM HAD TO BE EXTENDED FOUR TO FIVE YEARS BECAUSE OF LACK OF FUNDS. THIS SHORTNESS OF FUNDS, ACCORDING TO NARINAT, HAD CAUSED GRUMBLING AND MORALE PROBLEMS IN THE RANKS OF THE THAI ARMY. NARINAT SAID THAT WHAT THE ARMY LEADERSHIP WANTED WAS CONTINUING MAP ASSISTANCE AT APPROXIMATELY THE PRESENT LEVELS DURING THE CRUCIAL PERIOD OF CHANGE FROM AN AUTHORITARIAN TYPE OF GOVERNMENT TO A DEMOCRACY. ANYTHING LESS WOULD THREATEN TO PLUNGE THAILAND INTO CHAOS.)

7. GENERAL KRUEEN SAID ALSO THAT, IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF COMBAT EQUIPMENT, WE SHOULD PROVIDE ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND FACILITIES. HE SAID HE HAD VISITED SOME OF THE OPERATIONAL UNITS COMBATTING INSURGENCY IN THE NORTHEAST AND WAS AMAZED TO FIND THAT THERE WERE INADEQUATE MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO TAKE CARE OF SOLDIERS SUFFERING FROM EVEN MINOR WOUNDS.

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8. AT THIS POINT AIR CHIEF MARSHAL BUA INTERVENED TO ADVANCE TWO SPECIFIC AIR FORCE NEEDS:

A. THE FIRST WAS THAT WE ASSIST THE THAIS IN DEVELOPING IMPROVED CAPABILITIES FOR MAINTENANCE OF RTAF JET AIRCRAFT. WHEN I ASKED HIM WHAT HE HAD IN MIND HE SAID THEY WERE CAPABLE OF CLASS 1 AND 2 MAINTENANCE, BUT NOT CAPABLE OF CLASS 3 AND 4 MAINTENANCE FOR JET AIRCRAFT ENGINES. (JET ENGINE OVERHAUL NOW HAS TO TAKE PLACE OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY AT CONSIDERABLE EXPENSE.)

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DOD WASHDC

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B. HE THEN REITERATED THE LONGSTANDING THAI REQUEST FOR OV-10 AIRCRAFT. I EXPLAINED THAT I HAD STRONGLY SUPPORTED THEIR REQUEST BUT THERE WAS A CONFLICT BETWEEN USASF REQUIREMENTS ELSEWHERE FOR THIS PARTICULAR PLANE AND THE DESIRE OF THIS MISSION EVENTUALLY TO PROVIDE 16 OF THESE AIRCRAFT. I INFORMED HIM THAT DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE CLEMENTS AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR ISA ELLSWORTH WOULD BE VISITING THAILAND ON SEPTEMBER 30, AND SUGGESTED THE MATTER OF OV-10'S BE RAISED WITH THEM..

9. AFTER AGAIN MAKING A STRONG, HIGHLY PERSONALIZED APPEAL FOR AN EFFECTIVE LEVEL OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE, THE DEFENSE MINISTER SUGGESTED WE PROCEED TO THE ADJOINING RECEPTION-CONFERENCE ROOM TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE DEFENSE MINISTRY AS WELL AS OTHER MEMBERS OF THE US MISSION.

10. IN THE GENERAL SESSION I WAS ASKED TO BEGIN THE DISCUSSION, WHICH I DID BY SUMMARIZING THE MAIN POINTS OF THE MORE PRIVATE MEETING. GENERAL KRUEN AGREED WITH MY SUGGESTION THAT WE CONDUCT A JOINT ASSESSMENT OF THE INSURGENCY. HE DESIGNATED GENERAL KRAINGSACK CHAMANAN AS THE SECRET

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POINT OF CONTACT ON THE THAI SIDE AND ASKED HIM TO BE IN TOUCH WITH DCM MASTERS TO ARRANGE A MEETING. GENERAL KRIANGSAK SUGGESTED THAT THE INTERNAL SECURITY OPERATIONS COMMAND (ISOC) BE REPRESENTED AT THE MEETING AND I FULLY AGREED. WE AGREED TO TRY TO HOLD A MEETING DURING THE NEXT WEEK SO THAT I WOULD HAVE THE RESULTS OF THE JOINT ASSESSMENT AVAILABLE FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH US OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON DURING MY TRIP NEXT MONTH. GENERAL KRUEEN URGED THAT THE JOINT ASSESSMENT INCLUDE A DISCUSSION OF THE FUTURE NEEDS OF THE THAI MILITARY. I ALSO EXPRESSED MY HOPE THAT WE COULD EXPLORE AND CLARIFY ARRANGEMENTS FOR FUTURE ACCESS RIGHTS TO THAI BASES AND CONTINUED USE OF CERTAIN INTELLIGENCE FACILITIES WHICH WE CONSTRUCTED AND MAINTAIN IN THAILAND. GENERAL KRUEEN REPLIED THAT THIS WOULD BE A USEFUL TOPIC FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION. (COMMENT: WE WOULD PLAN TO TAKE UP THIS SUBJECT SEPARATELY. THE GROUP BEING ESTABLISHED FOR THE JOINT ASSESSMENT WILL LIMIT ITS ACTIVITIES FOR THE PRESENT TO THE INSURGENCY AND THAI MILITARY REQUIREMENTS.)

11. COMMENTS: DEFENSE MINISTER KRUEEN'S PRESENTATION PARALLELS VERY CLOSELY THAT GIVEN BY GENERAL SURAKIJ (BANGKOK 7820) IN WHICH HE STRONGLY STRESSED THE DESIRE OF THE THAI MILITARY FOR ADEQUATE ASSISTANCE NOW IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE NORTHEASTERN INSURGENCY FROM DEVELOPING TO A POINT WHERE THAILAND MIGHT BE THREATENED INTERNALLY WITH THE SAME DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES THAT CAMBODIA IS NOW EXPERIENCING. THE THAI MILITARY REGARD THE U.S. AS THEIR CLOSEST FRIEND AND ALLY AND ARE OBVIOUSLY UPSET, AND I BELIEVE WITH CONSIDERABLE JUSTIFICATION, OVER THE DECLINING LEVEL OF SUPPORT THAT THEY ARE RECEIVING FROM US AT THIS CRUCIAL TIME. WHEN I RETURN TO WASHINGTON THE END OF THIS MONTH I PLAN TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE, AND HOPE THAT I WILL RECEIVE SOME AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSES.

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